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SENSITIVE

8 August 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SPECIAL GROUP (AUGMENTED)

From: Brig. Gen. Lansdale

Subject: Medium-Wave Broadcasting to Cuba

At a meeting with the operational representatives of Operation Mongoose, 1 August, General Taylor and the Attorney General asked about the possibility of strong medium-wave broadcasts into Cuba. In response, Don Wilson of USIA has sent me some thoughtful studies on this subject, after collaboration with State and CIA at the operating level, and noting an earlier memorandum from Ed Murrow about broadcasts from the U.S. (which Mr. Murrow discussed with the Special Group). These studies are attached, for your information.

The conclusions reached are:

- a. Medium-wave broadcasts from stations in the U.S. are a possibility for short term tactical purposes. They would be illegal in terms of international agreement and could bring serious reprisals (Cuban interference with medium-wave broadcasts over wide areas of the United States).
- b. Although it was believed that Swan Island broadcasts could be strengthened and possibly undergo a character change (becoming similar to Radio Free Europe) to gain Cuban listeners, further study concludes that no new medium-wave capability should be developed from Radio Swan (difficult and expensive logistic problems, coupled with April 1961 reputation).
- c. A thousand kilowatt transmitter is in storage in the U.S. It is estimated that it would take about 15 months, at a cost of about \$8 million, to install a transmitter of this power as rapidly as possible.
- d. Ten locations around the Caribbean were studied as possible sites for a powerful transmitter, considering technical and political feasibility. Venezuela ranked first politically, tenth for technical reasons. The Dominican Republic would appear to present the best prospects from a political standpoint and ranks second technically. The political feasibility of establishing a transmitter on foreign soil in the other locations studied appears remote.

Declassified/Released on 12-28-88
(FRS-424) under provisions of E.O. 12065
by N. Moran, National Security Council

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e. Cuba could negate our medium-wave effort, if Castro so desired, by using surplus transmitters in Cuba to broadcast locally on the same frequency. (It is more difficult to jam short-wave broadcasts, due to the capability for simultaneous broadcasts on multiple frequencies.)

Attachments

"Special Handling" copies to:

Special Group (Augmented)

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 - General Taylor | 5 - Mr. Kennedy |
| 2 - Mr. Johnson | 6 - Gen. Lemnitzer |
| 3 - Mr. Gilpatric | |
| 4 - Mr. McCone | |

Operational Representatives

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 7 - Mr. Hurwitch (State) | 9 - Mr. Harvey (CIA) |
| 8 - Gen. Harris (Defense) | 10 - Mr. Wilson (USIA) |
| 11 - 14 - Chief of Operations | |

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WASHINGTON

August 3, 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Brig. General Edward G. Lansdale

SUBJECT: The Technical Feasibility of Medium Wave Broadcasting
to Cuba.

The problem presented is how best to provide a medium wave radio signal throughout the island of Cuba. For purposes of this study it is assumed that the transmitter will be located outside the continental United States, and it is assumed that the transmitter will have a power of a thousand kilowatts and will use a directional antenna. And it is further assumed that the North American Regional Broadcasting agreement (NARBA), to which the United States is a signatory nation, will be abrogated.

If it is assumed that a clear channel can be provided by the FCC and if it is assumed that the Cuban government would not attempt to interfere with the transmissions, satisfactory service could be provided from a number of Caribbean sites. If you were primarily interested in daytime coverage, Jamaica, Grand Cayman or Andros Island in the Bahamas would be best. However, if both day and night were considered, and varying factors were weighted, the sites would be ranked as follows: Nassau 61, Dominican Republic 59, Jamaica-Cayman Island 55, Navassa Island 50, Nicaragua-Honduras 49, Swan Island 48, British Honduras 44, Grand Abaco-Grand Bahama Island 43, Puerto Rico 42, Venezuela 37.

If the FCC did not provide a clear channel, nighttime coverage would be drastically reduced. In order to provide such a channel, the government would undoubtedly have to purchase an existing clear channel station since its value would be ruined by our extended use of its frequency. It should also be borne in mind that our transmitting power of a thousand kilowatts would undoubtedly severely interfere with U.S. and Caribbean stations on adjacent channels and would undoubtedly result in many complaints from Caribbean countries.

Previously (FIS-421) Declassified/Released on 12-28-88
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by N. Menden, National Security Council

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Even more serious, however, is the ease with which the Cuban government could negate the whole effort by placing some of their transmitters on whatever frequency we select. The shaded area on the map shows what the Cuban government could do merely by utilizing existing transmitters which are now surplus to their needs. These transmitters are surplus because they were built when there was private competitive broadcasting and most cities and towns had more than one transmitter. Now that there is only one program, many transmitters are no longer required. If Castro was sufficiently concerned to put most of his transmitters on our frequency, we would have virtually no listenership. It probably would not interfere too greatly with his own coverage, particularly in the cities.

While a thousand kilowatt medium wave transmitter is now in storage, the power plant would have to be procured or diverted from Liberia. It is estimated that it would take about fifteen months and cost about eight million dollars to install a transmitter of this power as rapidly as possible. This does not take into account whatever time would be required to obtain the political permission and to locate a physical site.

In contrast to medium wave coverage, short wave coverage is much more difficult to jam because you can operate on so many more frequencies simultaneously, and Castro's existing capabilities in the short wave field are limited. It is easy to provide a strong short wave signal from the U.S. or anywhere in the Caribbean. The new VOA station in North Carolina, which will commence broadcasting in December 1962, will provide an even stronger signal than our current excellent one. The number of short wave receivers in Cuba is unknown, although we do know that more than half of the defectors questioned at Opa Locka state that they have listened to short wave radio. It is interesting to note that a Latvian Electrical Company has announced that it has filled the first part of a large order of tropicalized receivers for Cuba capable of reception on both medium wave and short wave.

Attached is a paper outlining the technical factors considered in comparing ten different potential locations. The technical factors considered are:

- (1) Program feed from the U.S. (relative ease or difficulty in providing live program material to the transmitter from U.S. sources.)

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- (2) Skywave (nighttime) signal coverage of Cuba. (Signal coverage calculations are based on FCC skywave curves, increased by a factor of 4 db to take into account geomagnetic conditions in the Caribbean area.)
- (3) Groundwave signal coverage of Cuba. (Signal coverage based on FCC curves.)
- (4) Fading zone effects in Cuba (potential distortion and severe fading as a result of interaction of skywave and groundwave signals during the nighttime hours.)

Interference to or from radio stations in the U.S. or other adjacent countries, has not been considered since the assumption is made that the proposed station will operate on a clear channel.

The locations chosen for comparison are as follows (where several locations are lumped together, the technical suitability, propagation-wise, is considered to be essentially the same for each location):

- (1) Grand Abaco Island, Grand Bahama Island, and other nearby islands in Bahamas.
- (2) Nassau.
- (3) Navassa Island.
- (4) Puerto Rico.
- (5) Dominican Republic.
- (6) Swan Island.
- (7) British Honduras.
- (8) Nicaragua/Honduras (on the sea coast near border of the two countries.)
- (9) Cayman Island.
- (10) Venezuela.

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The attached chart shows the relative comparison between the various locations, considering the various technical factors as aforementioned.

(signed)

Donald M. Wilson
Deputy Director

Attachments

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	1.	2.	3.	4.	Total
Program feed from U.S.	5	10	-8	5	61
Skywave, nighttime signal in Cuba	5	4	3	4	59
Fading zone effects in Cuba	4	4	2	3	55
Groundwave, daytime signal in Cuba	4	5	5	5	50
	4	5	5	4	49
	4	3	2	3	48
	4	4	4	4	44
	4	3	2	2	43
	3	4	4	4	42
	5	2	1	1	37
	4	2	1	1	
Weighing Factor					
Nassau					
Dominican Republic					
Cayman Island - Jamaica					
Navassa Island					
Nicaragua/Honduras					
Swan Island					
British Honduras					
Gr. Abaco/Brand Bahama Island					
Puerto Rico					
Venezuela					

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Attachment #2

8 August 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL LANSDALE

From: Robert A. Hurwitch (State) and Don Wilson (USIA)

Subject: Joint State-USIA Memorandum

State and USIA have considered the political pros and cons of the 10 best locations for medium-wave transmitters. We rate them in the following order:

1. Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic would probably welcome such an opportunity. They are currently unhappy about Cuban broadcasts and would most likely be pleased to retaliate. A station in the Dominican Republic would have a Latin American cover, although it would have more of a taint of U.S. -Yankee influence than in Venezuela. It should be pointed out that the Council of State is scheduled to go out of office in December. Any successor to it might not be as enthusiastic about such a station.

2. Venezuela

This would be a very desirable choice because the Betancourt Government would provide highly acceptable cover for the station. The precarious position of the Government, however, makes it quite unlikely that Betancourt would agree to establishing the station in Venezuela, for it would gratuitously provide ammunition for his political opposition.

3. Jamaica/Cayman Islands

Despite its anti-Castro policies, the attitude of the newly independent Jamaican Government to such a project would probably be negative. The presence of many thousands of Jamaicans in Cuba would be a major factor affecting a Jamaican commitment of this kind.

4. Honduras

A station here would have a Latin American cover in a country that has a reasonably democratic tradition. However, the likelihood of the Honduran Government agreeing to the establishment of the station in Honduras before the elections in October 1963 is very remote.

Previously Declassified/Released on 12-28-88
(7-15-401) under provisions of E.O. 13526
by M. Moran, National Security Council

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5. Nassau/British Honduras/Gr. Abaco/Gr. Bahama Islands

A commitment by the British to such a broadcast facility would be very desirable politically. The involvement of a major NATO power would have beneficial effects throughout the Hemisphere. However, the possibility of British commitment to such a broadcast facility is practically nil.

6. Nicaragua

The image of Nicaragua as a long-time dictatorship would make this a most undesirable site. The credibility of a broadcasting station located in Nicaragua would be almost totally under-cut from its inception. The Nicaraguan Government would probably welcome such an opportunity, however.

7. Navassa/Puerto Rico

As U.S. territory, both these alternatives would bear the same general liabilities as a location in Florida.

8. Swan Island

We reject the consideration of Swan Island outright, because its credibility has been totally under-cut by its association in the minds of the Cubans with the April 1961 invasion failure.

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Attachment #3

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY
WASHINGTON

August 4, 1962

JOINT USIA-CIA MEMORANDUM FOR:

Brigadier General Edward G. Lansdale

In a memorandum dated May 23, 1962, from Edward R. Murrow to Brigadier General Edward G. Lansdale, USIA recommended a Radio Free Europe type approach utilizing either: the present facilities of Radio Swan, facilities located in Florida, one of the Caribbean Islands, or a floating transmitter. Since that time CIA has developed a Radio Free Europe type project to be operated from facilities located in Florida. USIA has not as yet seen this plan.

USIA and CIA have been asked to comment on the future capabilities of medium-wave broadcasting from Radio Swan -- Radio Americas. It is our present feeling that no new medium-wave capability should be developed from Radio Swan. Our reasons are as follows:

1. Radio Swan, a 50 kilowatt medium-wave station is operating at maximum technical capability now. In order to improve its technical capability, an entirely new facility would have to be constructed.
2. There are better locations than Swan Island for such new facilities. USIA's memorandum of August 3, 1962, addressed to you points out, for example, that Nassau, Dominican Republic, Cayman Island-Jamaica, Navassa Island, Nicaragua, Honduras are all better locations. Florida, of course, is too.
3. The logistics involved in supplying Swan Island are extremely expensive and difficult. The construction of a new facility would involve building a pier, developing off-shore fueling points and constructing an entirely new power supply. The Island is so small that the radiated power from new transmitters would create a problem of mutual interference with necessary receiving facilities.

Previously Declassified/Released on 12-28-77
(FBS-421) under provisions of E.O. 11652
by N. Moran, National Security Council

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4. Radio Swan is, in our opinion, inextricably linked with the failure of the April 17, 1961 invasion attempt. Its credibility is low. A new Radio Free Europe type sponsorship would always be tarred by past associations.

5. We do not believe that a change in the frequency would hide its identity. A change of frequency would be reported as a matter of course in the Free World. It certainly would draw continuing attention from Castro propagandists.

6. We do not believe that a change in name would materially improve the credibility of the station. Although currently called Radio Americas, the evidence from refugees indicates that Cuban listenership still regards the facility as Radio Swan.

(signed)

Donald M. Wilson
Deputy Director
USIA

Cleared by: CIA - Mr. Seymour Bolten (signed)

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